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7/99
THE CUTTING IN INTERPRETATION
THE 3 STEP METHOD
by Bill Gibron

There are several questions that haunt a forensics coach: "why didn't I break?", "what do you mean they changed the topic?", "what again, exactly, is this event all about?". But few have the ability to strike the fear of frustration and angst quicker than "how exactly do I cut this piece?". Students that compete in interpretation tend to have this mistaken belief that coaches spend their off hours reading every work by every author who ever put pen to paper and then, naturally and perfectly cut them into a manageable ten minute performance. The truth is, and I speak for myself when I say this, the hard me down method of interpretation cutting seems to be the norm. Find a work that has done well in the past (or maybe that was just 'done') and re-read the cutting to make sure it is still a viable piece, worthy of doing. Then turn it over to the student and 'Viola', from zero to hero in one brilliant copying job.

But what about those times when the piece is unknown, or hasn't been done in several years? What if you can't, God forbid, get a decent cutting? What if you are stuck trying to cut the piece yourself? Well, for most of us, this daunting task has become second nature, since years of trial and error have resulted in a formulaic and simplistic approach to the dilemma. But what about the new coach? What can they do if the closest they have come to cutting something was the throat of that irritating student who keeps begging for a piece to perform? Well, I have come up with a three step method that, hopefully, creates an easy and functional way to take a full play, script or other bit of appropriately published material and turn it into a working interpretation.

Before we begin, though, there are a couple of caveats. First, I would suggest leading the students to material, not the other way around. Just because South Park, or The Tom Green Show is the funniest thing ever to hit television (in the minds of students) does not mean it can be transformed into a high school forensics piece. Also, certain issues, while needing to be discussed and analyzed in a fictional setting, do not sit well with Mommy or Daddy as they judge, in the back of the round, mouth agape, at the graphic depictions of rape and sexual torture. Finally, do not forget the setting and the talent of the student. Little Jamie may be the next DeNiro, but giving him an over the top cross dressing female drag queen character is perhaps asking a bit much of a middle schooler.

After all these considerations have been taken, let the student drift into a bookstore or the school library and look over potential material. It is always better to find something they are interested in, than trying to sell them on your view of drama/humor. Once they have found something, or a couple of things, you should have a conversation with them, asking why they chose the piece, the author, etc. Ask them for the insights, the wisdom, the comedy as they see it in the piece. Try and discover the underlying reasons for their selection. They should be well founded and based in the material. They should never be 'because I think this can win'. You are a long way from making that determination.

The three steps can be performed by students, coaches or both. I tend to enjoy the act of reading, and as such, do not mind helping novices with their first go round at putting an interp together. However, after a piece or two, they should be well on their way to following the method themselves. Remind them, this will take time. A good interpretation is not magically created. It takes hard work and dedication. So begin with:

Step 1
Read the material for literary/interpretive MERIT:

Some things lend themselves to easy interpretation. Others still hold their mysteries in the head of the author, or in the imagination of the reader, and no matter how hard you try, how talented you are, or how much you think you or your student may be able to bring to it, sometimes, a piece just cannot be an interp. For example, John Cleese left Monty Python in the early 70's and created his own television show, Fawlty Towers, one of the best comedic creations in the history of broadcasting... Witty, satirical and staunchly character and situation driven, it was and is a joy to watch. A veritable laugh riot. But it is a near impossibility to interpret. Why? The reasons are as obvious as they are complex.

Cleese, when asked why he thought the show was so well regarded, made it clear that, as he wrote a script, he was intertwining several things: character, setting, cliches, subplot, previous episodes, outside influences and main story line. And this is apparent in the work. The episodes are dense and play like, with time taken away from the main narrative string to add a tangent, only to have it reappear minutes later as a payoff to a joke, or the insight into character. At 30 minutes plus, each show crammed novels worth of detail into the location, actors, settings and costumes. All this combines to make a wonderful entertainment.

But it also creates a mountain the size of Everest to pare down into a molehill called Humorous Interpretation. Cut a line here, and you risk losing the joke at the end. Remove a section here and a character becomes ill defined and pointless. Plots are too complex to streamline and most coaches would simply give up, since the stories play out for 20 or 30 minutes, and ten minute snippets are few and far between, if they are there at all. So this is why you read the piece. You need to determine if it indeed can work in a ten minute hunk. Also, you need to determine if the piece is more than a stand-up comedy routine, or the tearful rant.
ing of a melodramatic mind. You want the material to be well received, not protested. This first step, then, is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the next two steps.

Step 2
Determine the FOCUS of the Cutting

Once you have found a work with merit, it is now time to narrow the focus of the piece. There are several ways this can be done with a few examples being the following?

Character Driven:
Not following a plotline, per se, but instead the focus will be on lines and interchanges that capture the nature and nuance of the character(s) center to the piece.

Plot Driven:
Getting the story across, with the bare bones of characterization, tone development and subtext.

Tone Driven:
Not following the plotline or the characters, specifically, but using the material as a means to channel a point, or a mindset, or an overall theme for the performance.

Drama Intense:
Picking out those parts, and those parts only that explain, heighten and express the drama of the piece.

Humor Intense:
Picking out those parts, and those parts only, that explain, heighten and express the humor of a piece.

Subplotting:
Removing minor characters or scenes from a piece and using them as the main focus of the interpretation.

Twisting:
Viewing a piece in light of the twist one can bring to it. For example, taking a piece done exclusively by men and imagining and working through it as envisioned by an all female cast. Or a children’s tale as performed by adults.

Step 3
READ AND CUT
the piece in light of the focus.

It is now time to enter the most work intensive part of the cutting process, the actual cutting. What I recommend is, first, make two copies of the piece, either in its entirety, or just the portion you will be working with. Next, save one copy and work with the other. Grab a highlighter and, in the margin, make a small dot near every line of dialogue, every character and every action you will be using in the interpretation, always keeping in mind the focus, or what you are trying to accomplish with the piece. Once you are done, go back and highlight everything you have marked. Now read through it. Does it get your point across? Does it stay within your focus? Does it capture what you wanted it to? Does it? Great. Now, to recut.

Time the first run through. Unless you are near God-like in your abilities, you should be NOWHERE near ten minutes and probably have too much material, too many characters, and too many ideas to handle. So recut. Grab a RED pen and work through the first cutting, removing material here and there. Remember the focus. Concentrate on what you (or your student) can and cannot handle. Look at the number of characters. Actions that will have to be visualized. Moments that, while moving and fascinating, really add nothing to your main focus. Now, review the cutting. Again, time will probably be a factor. Now recut a third time.

This time, grab a BLACK pen and mark through additional material. But be careful. This is also the point at which you can actually KILL your inter. You need ten minutes, but if the ten minutes you end up with destroys the focus you have worked so hard to maintain, perhaps it is time to reexamine the focus. Or even the work. Just because you went through Steps 1 and 2 does not mean that the piece will end up working as an interpretation. After all, those were cursory decisions. You have now had time to work with the material, and if it does not want to cooperate, then step back and refocus the piece. Find something else in it that may work. Or, better yet, rethink the material, and perhaps scrap it for something a little more manageable.

There is one last step in all this, and that is the actual practice of the piece. However, it is stupid to list it here, since, after all, why would you be spending all this time shaping material just to have it sit on a shelf, or in a desk drawer. Through the actual interpretation process, you can see how successful you have been, or where the written word and your imagination run up against talent and the way it actually plays. Once all the kinks have been worked out of it, and you will see it coming together, take the second copy and create a master cutting. Save it for District and National Tournaments. File it away for the future. Maybe even include some notes from your overall review of the material (you DID take notes, didn’t you?) Begin to build an interpretation library, a resource for students to use in a pinch, or for you as a coach to remind you of pieces past.

By the way, this system works well with all interpretation, from Oral Interp to Duo. Just take into consideration the additional requirements those events demand. You may need more than one poem in Oral Interp to get the point across. Or perhaps the two characters you love the best for a Duo do not have ten minutes of mutual material. Once those factors are taken into consideration, you should have no problem using the methods prescribed herein. Shakespeare once wrote that, "the plays the thing!" Unfortunately, he was speaking of using it to capture his Uncle in the act of treason. Hopefully, by using these hints and ideas, you will no longer worry about the material capturing your flaws as a coach. After all, in a successful interp, the "cutting" is the thing.

(Bill Gibron coaches at the Academy of Holy Names (FL). He received the 1999 NFL Best Communications Award for his publication The Florida Sunshine Report. He is the son of a former NFL coach, Abe Gibron, who coached the Chicago Bears in the "other" NFL)

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The Scholars Program at the
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Barkley Forum • Emory National Debate Institute
June 18 – July 1, 2000 • Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
Under the Direction of Melissa Maxcy Wade

The Emory National Debate Institute has been contributing to the education of high school debaters for twenty-five years. The curriculum is steeped in the most fundamental aspects of debate: presentation, research, and critical thinking. An excellent combination of traditional argument and debate theory and an emphasis on current debate practice makes the Emory National Debate Institute one of the most successful year after year. Novice, mid-level, and varsity competitors have found the Institute a worthwhile learning experience because the staff has the expertise to teach all levels of students and the experience to adjust to a variety of student needs.

Features of the Policy Division
Under the Direction of Bill Newnam

Experienced staff: Our senior level staff has worked at this Institute and many others, including: American University, Bates College, Baylor University, Berkeley, Dartmouth College, Georgetown University, University of Iowa, University of Kentucky, Northwestern University, University of Michigan, Wake Forest University, Sanford University, and Stanford University.

Excellent staff-to-student ratio: The Institute offers debaters the opportunity to work with one senior level instructor accompanied by at least one active college debater in small lab groups of 10 to 20 students.

Flexible curriculum: The Institute has always provided students a wide variety of instruction suitable to their levels of experience. Each laboratory group has explicit objectives and a field tested curriculum for the two week period, dependent upon their level of experience.

Commitment to diversity: The Institute has always been committed to making instruction accessible to urban and rural areas. We have several funded scholarships dedicated to promoting diversity. Additionally, ongoing grants make it possible to support many students from economically disadvantaged areas.

Dormitory supervision: An experienced staff including high school teachers, graduate students, and college upperclass students will supervise the dormitory.

Coaches workshop: An in-depth coaches workshop is conducted. Topics will include administration, organization, and coaching strategies. A full set of lectures appropriate for the classroom will be developed.

Inclusive Fees: The standard Institute fee includes tuition, housing, food, lab photocopying fees, entertainment, a t-shirt, and a handbook—the works.

Features of the Lincoln-Douglas Division
Under the Direction of Jim Wade

Experienced staff: The Director of the Lincoln-Douglas division has been in the activity for over twenty years, and has served in his current position for eight years. Other staff members include an array of the finest college coaches, as well as some of the top college debaters in the nation.

Excellent staff-to-student ratio: The Institute offers debaters the opportunity to work with one senior level instructor accompanied by at least one active college debater in small lab groups of 10 to 14 students.

Flexible curriculum: The Institute has always provided students a wide variety of instruction suitable to their levels of experience. Our classes deal both with general philosophical issues and practical technique. There is a strong emphasis in lab groups on building speaking experience and providing constructive critique. A typical day involves three classes dealing with philosophy or technique and theory, followed by five hours of practical lab sessions.

Commitment to diversity: The Institute has always been committed to making instruction accessible to urban and rural areas. We have several funded scholarships dedicated to promoting diversity. Additionally, ongoing grants make it possible to support many students from economically disadvantaged areas.

Dormitory supervision: An experienced staff including high school teachers, graduate students, and college upperclass students will supervise the dormitory.

Inclusive Fees: The standard Institute fee includes tuition, housing, food, lab photocopying fees, entertainment, and a t-shirt—the works.

For an application, write or call:
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- Useful to novice and experienced debaters as a starting point for thoughtful analysis and research
- Useful bibliographies included

For more information
nfhs.org

This publication, the first of a planned annual resource for Lincoln-Douglas debate, is designed to introduce debaters to the ten potential resolutions for National Forensic League competition in the year 2000. We make no claim to be the definitive word on any of these issues. Instead, the discussions are intended to stimulate thinking about the issues, and to provide a starting point for thoughtful analysis and research. Although only half of the resolutions included will actually be used in competition during the year 2000, each analysis provides commentary on issues that recur within Lincoln-Douglas debate over a period of time. Hopefully, these will prove a useful resource for novice LD debaters as additional areas for analysis and research, and for more experienced competitors as they conceptualize arguments and strategies that transcend specific resolutions.

Call 1-800-776-3462 and place your order today!
SPEED IN L/D: BLESSING OR BANE?
by William (Rusty) McCrady

Back in 1995, I was called for jury duty. By some small miracle, I immediately got assigned to a trial the morning I reported. The trial proceeded quickly, and after a couple of hours of testimony and cross examination, the attorneys presented their closing arguments. I was particularly impressed by the prosecutor, who had outlined his arguments on a legal pad, and presented his case in a clear, deliberate manner so that his message escaped none of us on the jury. As a debate coach, I took note of his organization, emphasis of key points, and general style. I sensed that his approach was virtually the same as what we L/D coaches try to instill in our competitive debaters.

Fast forward to a debate I observed this spring at our District Tournament. As an audience member (not a judge), I witnessed a brilliant debater from a high school in Virginia blitz her opponent with a negative case that must have been delivered at a clip of over 200 words per minute. I kept thinking that it would be next to impossible to take notes on her case for purposes of making a rebuttal or even just to keep track of her points in order to flow the argument in order to judge the debate. When I found out much later that she had won the debate, I was not really surprised, but to be honest, I was troubled. Her opponent, who spoke at a little over half her rate (in other words, at a normal rate of delivery), had in fact made a valiant attempt not to "drop" any arguments, but I guess that the judge felt that her attempt to address this "lightning" speed was not quite sufficient.

Why was I uneasy about the verdict in this debate? I had to ask myself: is my bias in favor of natural tone and normal rate of delivery outmoded in today's world of competitive debate? This may be the case, but even if I am voicing a minority opinion, I still feel the need to take a stand against speed debating, especially in the realm of Lincoln-Douglas rounds.

I keep going back to my experience as a member of a jury, and to memorable moments in presidential debates, political speeches, graduation speeches, and other examples of persuasive oratory directed to the ordinary reasonable person — not to a specialized audience. As debate coaches, shouldn't we be educating our students to express themselves and their opinions in the real world, and not just in the insular world of competitive debate? To be honest, I cannot think of any instances where speed talking is used effectively in real life, other than at the end of those commercials when the announcer has to rattle off a fifty word disclaimer in ten seconds, or by the auctioneer calling out prices and bids.

Granted, there are advantages to using a rapid fire delivery in debate. The technique has been honored for decades in policy debate, where the burden on both sides is to present reams of documentation in an incredibly short amount of time, both to bolster a case and to counter an opponent with an equally impressive array of facts and examples. In its early years, Lincoln-Douglas debate was deemed by its supporters to be different in both style and substance from its policy counterpart. Thus, for a while at least, it seemed that speed was frowned upon, and oratorical effectiveness and a natural, listener-friendly delivery were encouraged and promoted. But in the heat of competition, things change.

It is not hard to figure out why speed talking has become popular in Lincoln-Douglas debate. First of all, it enables a debater to present vast volumes of material — often five or six contentions instead of the more conventional three. In so doing, a debater presents the opponent with a highly complex argument and many points to address and refute. Thus the opponent's task becomes that much more difficult, and the likelihood of dropping one or more of the fast talking opponent's points greatly increases. A second, related advantage is that the opponent will have great difficulty trying to take complete and comprehensible notes on a case that is delivered so rapidly. Thus the opponent may become so overwhelmed and frustrated that s/he will be thoroughly demoralized by the end of the speedy opponent's constructive. Third, a fast talking debater naturally adopts an aggressive style and tone, which some coaches apparently encourage and deem the epitome of how a competent debater should sound and act. In debate, speed and an attack mentality seem to go hand-in-hand.

Finally, perhaps the most telling of all the advantages of speed is its effect on judges who have become accustomed to speed talking as a standard debating technique. My theory is that such judges fall into two groups. First, there are those judges who really can follow the flow of argument presented at a high rate of speed, and thus expect all debaters not only to follow the argument as they have, but to prepare an equally speedy rebuttal in the small allotment of preparation time. While I do not agree with such judges philosophically, as I will explain later, I certainly respect their listening skill and ability to comprehend detailed arguments delivered at such a rapid rate. Unfortunately, the second category of judges comprises those who are unable to follow such lightning arguments, but then refuse to penalize the debater for their rate of delivery, and instead credit this debater for using speed to put the opponent at a disadvantage. (Granted, a third category of judges resent an excessively fast delivery, and criticize it accordingly.)

Given the above advantages, I may be unwise in finding fault with speed debating. However, I keep going back to that jury duty experience, and I ask myself: How effective would that prosecutor have been if he had addressed the jury at 200 words per minute? In other words, my nagging concern is that fast talking is a skill whose utility is limited to competitive debate and high pressure salesmanship. If we teach it or advocate it as a desirable public speaking technique, we may be doing our students a grave disservice. A secondary concern is that speed debating will proliferate out of necessity, since an opponent who wants to win is forced to speed up delivery in order to address all of the fast talking opponent's contentions. But as we learn in our study of morality, what is deemed necessary isn't always right.

Maybe speed has become so widely accepted that my objections will be seen by most experts as provincial or antiquated. Still, I must conclude by asking the reader a question: was your most memorable teacher a fast talker, or someone who spoke in deliberate, measured, confident phrases?

(William (Rusty) McCrady, coach at Walter Johnson HS, (MD.) is president of the Montgomery County Debate League.)
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U.S./CUBA YOUTH DEBATES SCHEDULED FOR HAVANA
by John Tredway

Background
In late 1997, I made contact with representatives of the Cuban government to bring a group of American high school students to Cuba to have an open discussion of issues separating the two countries. The United States government would not permit such a visit in 1998.

The nearly 40-year old U.S. embargo against Cuba was tightened during the 1990's to the point that relatively few Americans—mostly journalists, government officials, university researchers and Cuban Americans visiting ailing relatives—are granted licenses by the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the U.S. Treasury Department.

The situation changed with the January 5, 1999 announcement by President Clinton that the wanted to see more people-to-people contact with Cuba. In May 1999, I was granted one of the first licenses by the Office of Foreign Assets Control allowing secondary schools the opportunity to make legal visits to Cuba.

Havana Negotiations
I met for three days with representatives of the Union Jovenistes de Comunismo (the Cuban Communists) in Havana. We negotiated a mission statement and an agreement on free speech to bring students for a series of debates, January 18-25, 2000 in Cuba. The debates will center around the embargo, human rights conditions, the flow of refugees to the United States, international athletic competitions, access to the Internet by Cuban students and the most important question for future leaders of both countries: mindful of differences in the past, where do we go from here?

Project Innovation
Few Americans travel to Cuba and even fewer go with the permission of the U.S. government! This project will be a first for secondary schools and the debates will give U.S. and Cuban youth the first real discourse about a unique and troubled relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. According to Larry Corwin, Assistant Public Affairs Director at the U.S. Interest Section in Havana: "The debates are shining example of President Clinton's plan to increase people-to-people connections between U.S. citizens with Cubans."

Congress Agenda
I am not expecting Cuban students will be able to argue a position contrary to official policy but the Congress format will enable us to have a debate. Cuban students will submit five bills/resolutions and we will do the same. Some possibilities include:

* A bill to end the U.S. embargo (this will be a Cuban bill)
* A resolution for the U.S. and Cuba to agree to the U.N. Declaration On Human Rights (we plan to submit this resolution)
* A bill to allow Cuban sovereignty over the U.S. base at Guantanamo (Cuban)
* A bill to allow access to the Internet for Cuban students (U.S.)
* A resolution for independent drug testing at international athletic competitions (Cuban)

Delegates Selected
A student group of 26 from Oregon will form the U.S. delegation: 17 from Ashland High School, four from Gresham High School, one from Grant High School and four from North Eugene High School. All students have completed at least two years of Spanish and several are NFL members.

This will be the first time in nearly forty years that citizens of the U.S. have traveled to Cuba for the purpose of holding formal debates about policies dividing the U.S. and Cuba. While we have seen baseball teams and choral groups performing in Cuba, it is exciting to have a discourse between future leaders of both countries. During this historic time in January 2000, we plan to remember the past while communicating possibilities for the future.

My work in NFL over 28 years is the real inspiration for this project. The debate process is the best forum for building international relations and I have great confidence that our Congress format will open new avenues of communication.

(John Tredway is District Chair for the South Oregon District and coaches at Ashland HS (OR)).
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GIVING BETTER 1AR'S
by David M. Cheshier

This month my aim is to offer specific, practical advice for improving the first affirmative rebuttal. Thanks to the pressure negative teams impose during the block, the 1AR is one of the most demanding speeches given in the debate, and too many rounds are decided based on technical problems there. After reviewing some of the basics, I address four issues now receiving some attention, all of which entail debunking certain myths about good 1AR's. Then I'll review some tricks of the trade, designed to help make the first affirmative rebuttal a speech of real beauty, as opposed to those painful exercises we've all seen in just "getting the job done." What may surprise you is how easily these tips can be utilized in your own debating.

Things You Already Know About The 1AR,
But Must Never Forget

If you've given even a single 1AR, you understand immediately the basic mechanics of the speech, which boil down to this simple but hard reality: The 1AR has five minutes to comprehensively extend arguments made in thirteen. This basic and brutal fact deters many otherwise good rebuttals when a speaker gives in to the temptation to over-explain, thereby misallocating precious speech time. I argue later that the time demands of the 1AR do not require a total absence of explanation, but, to be sure, the opportunities for explanation are in short supply, and must be carefully exploited.

You also know, I presume, some other 1AR basics: There is the imperative of partnership survival: Cover, cover, cover! Arguments dropped by the 1AR are especially hard to recover from later in the
round, since judges expect to screen out new or resurrected claims in the last affirmative speech. You know also that good 1AR's should minimize their use of preparation time, leaving the bulk (though not necessarily all, as I discuss momentarily) to their partner's speeches. It is usually, though not always, a good idea to avoid reading new evidence in the 1AR, again simply because of the time demands. If evidence is to be introduced it must be concentrated on truly critical issues, under situations where you and your colleague have honestly concluded the round's outcome is in peril if the key card isn't read.

It is essential to extend the basic net benefit claims of the affirmative case, such as impact evidence and solvency claims where they have been contested. Certain other negative positions, because they have a priori standing in any judge's decision making, such as topicality, arguments that "turn" the case, and some critiques and decision rule claims, must be answered or the debate will be instantly lost.

At the end, so much of effective 1AR delivery is simply a matter of understanding one's limits. It is simply impossible to extend every claim, so choices must be made. With practice these choices can be made intelligently, in a way designed to put maximum pressure on the second negative rebuttalist. And choices are made in many ways: by consideration of what claims can be answered quickly and which can be conceded altogether, and by conscious and strategic decisions about where time is best invested, to mention two of the most important.

Effective 1AR's also come to the speech with detailed knowledge of the affirmative case. Nothing subverts argument efficiency more than ignorance. And I'm referring to more than a basic understanding of the case claims and plan mechanisms; if you have an intimate knowledge of the affirmative sources, your ability to efficiently reference key claims will help you economically move through complicated refutation.

Four Myths

The imperative of achieving hyper-efficiency in the affirmative rebuttal has given rise to four points of view, sometimes not expressed or often defended, but apparently shared in many quarters. I describe them as myths to be debunked although some make forceful cases for each, usually because they have seen a brilliant exception that, in their view, proves the rule.

MYTH 1:
"My rebuttal will be better if delivered 'stand-up.'"

Stand-up 1AR's are speeches delivered without use of preparation time. Their appeal is obvious, and many debaters just transitioning to open-varsity division competition resolve to deliver stand-up rebuttals after seeing top-flight debaters do them with apparent success. Beyond the obvious benefit of saving valuable preparation time for the 2AR, it can disorient the second negative rebuttalist a bit if the 1AR stands immediately, since some rely on a brief prep period to talk things over with their partner. There is thus some case for notetaking 1AR preparation time, since it can rob the 2NR of prep time as well.

There is a considerable danger in stand-up 1AR's, however, the danger of nonextension. It happens in several ways, and in my view is almost inevitable because of one fundamental fact about stand-up speeches: You cannot flow yourself and someone else at the same time. The prospect of not flowing the block, which is explicitly advocated by some as a prep time reduced (the advice is to just listen and immediately write out your 1AR arguments), invites disaster. Not having a flow of the block makes it almost impossible to go back and do more serious prepping if it becomes necessary. One-step prepping produces less well considered extensions, for one has time enough only to write down the first idea that comes into mind before the 2NC or 1NR is off to the next idea. Consideration will almost always improve on this first instinct.

I have acquired some confidence in my own ability to tell when a rebuttal has been prepared without flowing the block. Such rebuttals are blippier and advance claims less coherent and strategically sound. Another dead giveaway is that the time allocation often precisely reproduces the allocation in the block. It should only take a second's thought to generate reasons why this fact might not favor the affirmative.

The advocates of stand-up 1AR's prepared in this way strongly disagree with me, to be sure. And, as one of them, you may be taken with the sheer thrill if jumping to your feet the second the 1NR sits down. If so, at least consider this compromise: Decide as the block unfolds where the time is going to be allocated, and based on their decisions, choose to flow some and not others. There's nothing wrong with refusing to take a detailed flow of throwaway case claims you would want to group anyway, and doing so can contribute to your preparation and coverage efficiency. But determine to take a good flow of the 2NR and 1NR on the couple most complicated and essential arguments, so that at least there, you have the flow necessary to generate and extend your most sophisticated claims.

MYTH 2:
"I explain; therefore I fail."

Time allocation mistakes are the most common errors made by 1AR's, and we have grown so sensitive to the risk that we now commonly tell 1AR's to omit all explanation of any kind. "Just say it and move on" is now typical advice. This thinking is misguided when stated so extremely, and can produce speeches where explanation has been discarded along with reasons, warrants, data, and all the markers of thought itself.

The trick is to know when explanation is appropriate, even conceding the harsh time limits that circumscribe opportunities for oratory. Sometimes explanation can increase efficiency. There are times when simply articulating a complicated thought once (say, in overview, or at the first available line-by-line opportunity) can save you time later, if only preventing repetition. Of course there is no time for extravagant overview introductions, and they aren't strategically wise so early in the rebuttals anyway. But a crisp explanation of a confusing link takeout, or an articulate explanation of why a theory objection to the counterplan should be voted on, can have enormous effect.

MYTH 3:
"It is more efficient to have my partner prep part of my 1AR."

This can be debunked the most easily, I hope. Relying on someone else to script the 1AR (or any rebuttal, for that matter) is a terrible idea in all but the most extreme circumstances:

(a) it diverts your partner from flowing you, a bad idea;
(b) you sound worse reading someone's else's bad handwriting than making your own arguments. The result? Greater inefficiency and confusion. And,
(c) script reliance increases meltdown risks. The process of delivering a high speed speech is stressful enough without the added strain of sightreading a brand new script. Don't let yourself be scripted!

MYTH 4:
"A little 1AR incomprehensibility is a good thing."

This is the most insidious myth of all,
in part because while many judges and debaters implicitly endorse it, you won’t often hear this point of view openly expressed, and so the occasions for debunking it are rare.

Since you won’t often hear a coach advocate IAR incomprehensibility (maybe you’ve never heard it, it seems harder than it is to explain this paradox of top-flight national circuit debating: Perfectly skilled debaters, able to give exquisitely clear negative rebuttals, suddenly turn into monsters of spew in the IAR. I think this outcome happens because we implicitly endorse it in our judging and coaching behavior: Although we all say we want perfectly clear and understandable IAR’s (and in the abstract, for the good of the activity, I’m sure we do), too often we encourage, or fail to discourage incomprehensibility there. It happens for reasons quite easy to see, which prove all too tempting. The dark secret, well known to any skilled 2AR, is that a little incomprehensibility in the IAR can be quite helpful, and sometimes even a lot of confusion can help the affirmative more than the negative. IAR incomprehensibility arguably hurts the 2NR more than the 2AR: the 2NR doesn’t want to waste his or her prep time chasing down unclear claims, and knows judges are usually unpersuaded by pleas for mercy (most judges I know think they sound whiny). This phenomenon explains for some why 2AR’s with basically skilled but incomprehensible partners so often do well in speaker award competition: 2AR’s end up benefiting from their job as clean-up artists. Incomprehensibility often goes unfixed because it is rarely penalized; judges empathize with the pressures IAR’s feel, and are loathe to come down too hard on a 1AR who was incomprehensible but covered everything.

But IAR incomprehensibility is out of balance a terrible thing. It degrades all the speeches that follow, as the last two rebuttalaes desperately struggle to turn your undecipherable Rosetta Stone into a translatable document. Inarticulate IAR’s introduce a fatal disconnection between constructive and rebuttal, and the price is usually that much of the subtlety of the 2AC/2NC/1NR speeches is lost forever. And while the occasional 2AR is bailed out by the ability to artfully reinterpret IAR jibberish, the on-balance effect is harmful there as well. Judges usually figure out the new 2AR lies, eliminating any benefit. And the points go down, down, down.

The most fundamental problem in the pro-incomprehensibility view is its concession that you are better served when they don’t know what you’re saying than when they do. What does this say about the quality of your arguments?

**Trick 1: Circle the Best**

Here’s a very simple trick the IAR should use in preparing the speech: as you listen to your partner give the 2AC, on each major position (disadvantage, topicality violation, critique, major case argument) circle the two or three best or truest answers made, or just circle the number of those responses. After a couple of debates you will know these instinctively, since the experience you’ve accumulated has taught you what turns or permutations or takeouts tend to work best over time. And you’ve seen what your partner tends to believe is the truest answer, what she sounds best in extending.

There are, of course, important strategic calculations to keep in mind when making this selection. In debating counterplans, think carefully before you commit to extend intricate theory objections (such as that conditionality, dispositionality, negative fiat, or plan-inclusive counterplans are illegitimate); they will eat up your time like no other argument, and are often hard to win judges on. You will in all likelihood want to keep a permutaion alive in the IAR. In critique debates, it is usually time efficient for the IAR to extend so-called "permutations," or performative contradiction claims, and not so efficient to extend even intricate "wrong forum" arguments. It may be best to keep alive certain "counter-critique" arguments, especially in debating Foucault on this year’s education topic. When extending disadvantages, beyond the obvious insight that good turnarounds should be extended, remember also to extend the relevant uniqueness responses, so the turn is unique and you preserve the possibility of a marginal net benefit for the affirmative.

From the 2AC on, let those circled numbers guide you. First, put your prep priority on those responses. Make sure you are comprehensively extending prioritized arguments even if your desire to limit prep time use means those are all you precisely script. Second, let those circles guide your eyes down the flow during your speech. If you get to the last disadvantage with only seconds remaining, instead of starting at the top, or forcing your partner to wave his arms so you’ll jump to the right critical response (as in, "IDIOT: GET TO THE TURN!"), just cover the issues you’ve prioritized. Your coverage may still be metaphysically inadequate, but at least the essential arguments are extended for your colleague.

Much of what you will want to say on these highlighted arguments can be prepped, by the way, in advance. While the 2NC takes his or her couple of minutes, the IAR can often script a very concise summary statement of the argument, even writing it out word for word, so the temptation to otate too much is corrected (that is, once the IAR gets there, just clearly read what is scripted, as opposed to trying to explain the point over again). So often, critical disadvantage turns are simply mishandled in the block, and a very quick and clear restatement of the argument in the IAR can be enough to win the debate on, since the judge will often end up simply calling for the relevant evidence and deciding the issue from there.

The circle trick solves a major source of time misallocation in the IAR, since too much time is wasted extending so-called argument "pimps," those quickly made 2AC presses. IAR’s go for them because they attract little 2NC ink, so IAR coverage seems efficient, but the payoff is usually not worth it, and too much time gets wasted at the top of the argument as a result. An important clarification: I’m not urging you to never extend these fast asserted takeouts. If there truly is no internal link to the disadvantage, of course you should extend the point. But letting circled arguments set your priorities for the speech will force your attention to only the best of your partner’s answers. Here’s a tip, by the way, for the 2AC who debates with a less experienced partner: Before the tournament review what these couple most important responses are, so your 2AR bases will be covered even if the rest of the IAR goesastray.

**Trick 2: Prep the Sequence**

I hope this tip speaks for itself. Too often IAR’s stand up and produce a road map for the speech off the top of the head. Sometimes impromptu decisions about the road map doom the speech, leaving the rebuttal with too little time at the end to adequately cover something critical. It is worth taking just a couple extra seconds of prep time to talk through the sequence with your partner. Proper sequence in the IAR is no less important than in either of the last
TRICK 3: Group Where Possible, and It's Almost Always Possible.

Consider grouping topical violations and case positions, almost always. That is, literally say: "Group the violation," and then make six to ten global arguments in response. Less frequently, but importantly, consider grouping major positions (like off-case arguments) which received attention in the block but which were hurriedly extended. It is rare that you would want to group major positions receiving major attention in the block.

Grouping increases your time economy in several ways, and is strategically valuable too. Not having to signpost to every single 1NR topicality extension can save you critical seconds. Grouping can reduce prep time use (this is one reason stand-up speeches are possible, since so much prep time can be saved in not scripting line by line you can literally write down answers as the 2NC/1NR speaks). Grouping can help your partner too, by giving him or her sometimes essential flexibility to creatively apply your answers where necessary.

There are some important dangers to be avoided. One is that too much will be grouped, making the 1AR sound slippier and committed only to taglines, as opposed to real argument extension. As I mentioned, this is one of the concerns which leads me to oppose a general "standup" strategy, since too often it leads to overgrouping. The point to remember is this: grouping is a time allocation aid because it frees time for the more important positions, not because every argument should be grouped. The other important danger is that grouped positions will not substantively advance the argument. When a disadvantage is grouped, for example, it can be too easy for the 1AR to revert to simply repeating 2AC claims. When this happens, the job of the 2NR is made easier, not harder: he or she needs only to extend their original takeouts and the debate is won.

TRICK 4: Prep the Endgame.

Try to debate in ways that make your partner's 2AR easier and more damaging to major negative claims. Convert arguments which have you on the defensive, grinding away at your speechtime, into offensive voting issues for your side. If the negative has made a particular decision rule claim into a voting issue, answer it but also see if you can devise a way to argue for their defeat based on the original claim. Or try to shift the argumentative ground onto issues where you know you have a lot more evidence to read, if necessary, in the last rebuttal.

TRICK 5: Practice, Practice, Practice.

The 1AR can especially benefit from rebuttal reworks at home, in part because so much of doing them well revolves around larger skill and structural dimensions (the basic level of comprehensibility, signposting clarity, and time allocation, to name three) that an external observer can judge even without having seen the whole round.

The basic rework drill is usefully revised in two ways for 1AR's: If there is a major "overexplanation" crisis, then requiring that the rebuttal be regiven in less time can help. Cutting the speech down to four minutes so overtaxes debaters with a tendency to overexplain that they are almost invariably broken of the habit by the drill. Of course, one must be careful in thinking condensation is a cure-all: if all the drill accomplishes is superfast or less coherent talking, then it is self-defeating. A second revision can work better, and involves the 2AC as well. Instead of a full practice debate, pick one issue that is debated through a hypothetical 1AR. Start with the 2AC reading scripted responses to, say, a Clinton disadvantage, then have the appropriate team member give a full 2NC blow-up, followed by an abbreviated 1AR focused just on the disadvantage. Zeroing in on just one issue in this way can promote useful discussions about strategic thinking, signposting, grouping, the appropriate use of very efficient issue overviews, and the adequacy of point-by-point explanation.

This last drill is sometimes resisted by 1AR's, since it fails to reproduce both the overall climate of pressure typical of the speech, and the normal sense of panic that accompanies quick preparation. But when one considers the percentage of debates on this topic which comes down to Clinton, the Lopez counterplan, and the Foucault critique, it is foolish not to carry out concentrated 1AR drill work on this issues.

TRICK 6: See Targeted Feedback.

I often find myself in this scenario when judging, and I don't think I'm alone: After the debate I'll be asked by a debater how they might have improved the 1AR. It is a good question you should always ask if you give the speech. But the problem for most judges, unless some immediate problem or compliment comes to mind, is that their thinking is understandably focused on what happened in the last two speeches. After all, those speeches almost always generate the final grounds for decision. I confess I often hear myself say vague comments, like: "Well, you overallocated a bit to that cheapshot topicality argument. Otherwise, pretty good!" But of course such advice doesn't help much.

Smart debaters don't let me or others off the hook that easily. They may follow up with the question, "Well, what one major change should I have made?" But this may not work either, not because the question is poor so much as that it, too, fails to trigger full recollection of the speech in the judge's mind. Try this instead: "May I ask a favor? Would you mind looking at your flow of me on the Clinton disadvantage? Do you think I went for the right answers? Do you see any particular place I screwed up and over- or underallocated time? Do you see places on your flow where you found it hard to make sense of my extensions?" It's not necessary to wear a judge down by going through every major position to quickly elicit productive feedback. And focused feedback of this kind will be much more useful than general cliches.

Here's a final piece of advice, though it may seem a bit bizarre in a debate world used to giving the glory to debaters who give the last rebuttal: Work to become so effective a 1AR that you are in contention for major speaker awards. It happens every now and then, and while it's rare, judges crave hearing a 1AR so well argued and clear they can justify awarding it a 29 or 30. Wouldn't it be great to overcome the worst 1AR myth of all, that the 1AR is always the "weaker" partner?

(David M. Cheshier is Assistant Professor of Communications and Director of Debate at Georgia State University. His column appears monthly in the Rostrum.)
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NEW CONGRESS PROCEDURES
by Harold Keller and Gary Harmon

Rules Changes

* No NFL district shall state or imply that if a student qualified in a previous event, that student may not qualify for the National Congress.

* If a student qualifies in Congress and in another event or events, s/he must make a decision and notify the District Chairperson concerning the event s/he decided not to enter at the National Tournament. Participation in Congress and any other main event is not permitted.

* No District Committee should set limits on the number of students entering the District Congress that is in conflict with the Congress Tournament Manual concerning apportionment.

* The District Committee should align the District Congress, as closely as possible, with the Student Congress Manual guidelines as well as align itself as closely as possible with the guidelines and protocol of the National Student Congress.

* Change the Congress Apportionment Chart to:
  1-20 Members & Degrees  2 Senate
  (Currently 1-10 = 2 and 1, 11-20 = 2 and 2)


* Increase the minimum of required hours for on floor legislative debate for a one day student Congress from 4 to 5 hours. A two day Congress must have a minimum of 8 hours of on-floor debate for the two days combined.

Qualification Changes in District Congress

Replace the current guidelines concerning National Congress qualifiers and number of schools with the following:

Senate

A district with 8 schools or more represented may qualify 2 Senators for the National Senate.

Without 8 schools no Senate may be seated but a district may still conduct a house with sufficient entries

It is strongly encouraged that when 30 or more students are entered in the District Senate, two Senators, or a "Super Session Senate, should be conducted to determine the National Senate qualifiers.

House

25 to 29+ students in 1 House only may qualify 1 to Nationals
30 to 60+ students in 2 Houses may qualify 2 to Nationals
61 to 90+ students in 3 Houses may qualify 3 to Nationals
91+ in 4 Houses may qualify 4 to Nationals

School entries in the House must be proportionally divided in the several House chambers.

No more than four (4) students may qualify for the National House of Representatives from a District based on the total number of students entered in the District House of Representatives and based on the number of Chambers in which those students were divided.

National qualification is to be based on number of Congress participants as well as the number of Chambers.

It is encouraged that when multiples of 30 students are entered in the House, an additional Chamber be established. Ideally, a chamber should seat no more than 25 Congress contestants.

Guidelines for a Final Session of Congress

An NFL District may choose to hold a Final (Super) Session of Congress at their District Congress Tournament. A District should review the Student Congress Manual and follow, as closely as possible, the same procedure and protocol that is used at the National Student Congress (SCM 2000, pp 9, 10, 11). However, certain guidelines must be followed:

A. There must be a preliminary session (or sessions) of Congress in two or more Chambers, from which the top ranked or voted students advance. A final session of Congress should seat no more than 24 contestants and must have a minimum of four hours of on-floor legislative debate.
   1. If two preliminary chambers, advance not fewer than 8 from each chamber and not more than 12.
   2. If three preliminary chambers, advance not fewer than 6 from each chamber and not more than 8.
   3. If four preliminary chambers, advance not fewer than 4 from each chamber and not more than 6.

B. The number of students advancing to the National Congress is in direct ratio to the number of preliminary chambers conducted from which the top students in the preliminary chambers advanced to the Final Session of Congress.

C. A final Session of Congress should have two and preferably three scorers. One of those Scorers may serve as the Parliamentarian.

1. A District may opt to have the Congress Scorers and Parliamentarians decide which student Congress contestants advance to the National Congress. A District may have the Scorers and Parliamentarians choose the National Qualifiers in one or both Congress Chambers and/or have the students elect the National Qualifiers in one or both Chambers.

2. A District may have the Congress Scorers and Parliamentarians select the most superior Congress contestants (not more than 7) and then proceed to an election process in that final Session in which the student Congress contestants select/elect their own National Senators and/or Representatives. A District may nominate their most outstanding Congress contestants by taking the top speaker point contestants, placing not fewer than three and not more than seven on the final ballot.
a. It is strongly recommended that the District use the "base system" for scoring in the Final Session of Congress as the goal is to keep all contestants on a "level playing field" for being eligible. No contestant should automatically be placed in nomination by speaker points simply because s/he was fortunate enough to get in an extra scored speech.
b. It is strongly recommended that preferential ballot be used for the selection/election process of the national Qualifiers from a Final Session of Congress. The preferential ballot will determine the qualifiers as well as the alternates for the National Congress.
c. If a District uses the student voting process, as used in the election of President Officers, all National Qualifiers and Alternates must be elected by a majority of Congress contestants in the final session chamber. (Please consult your 2000 edition of the National Congress manual, page SCM 8 "Selecting of Superior Member, #3).

D. If a final session of Congress is conducted in either the House or the Senate, and a base system is used as recommended for awarding NFL Speaker Points, the Presiding Officer shall also be awarded points on the base. The Presiding Officer is to be scored for one speech (1 to 6 NFL speaker points) for each hour of presiding. Each hour of Presiding also determines the Speaker's priority for recognition for on-floor debating in the event s/he relinquishes the Chair. If the base for a Chamber is less than the total hours of presiding in the chamber, the Presiding Officer's points shall be determined by placing the number of hours on the same base as the other Congress contestants' speech base. For example: if the base is 3, and even if the Presiding Officer has presided for four or more hours, his/her points for presiding shall be determined on the base of three as are all other contestants in that session.

Changes in National Congress Procedure
(As established in 1999)

A. Breaking to Semi Finals: Two scorers and one parliamentarian will be used per preliminary session. The Parliamentarian shall assign bonus participatory points to each congress person on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 points (high) at the end of the preliminary sessions.

1. Congress officials (Parliamentarians and Scorers):
a. The Parliamentarian may advance two students based upon the overall performance of the Congress student in the preliminary sessions.
b. The high NFL point earners, determined by adding the four scorers' point totals, converted to the base system, and the Parliamentarians bonus points, shall advance to the semi finals. The number of Congress contestants advancing to the semi final session shall not exceed a total of eight.

2. The base system for determining qualifiers shall be used (See Congress Manual concerning the Base System).

B. In the event that there is not a clean break in points, and a tie exists that would advance more than eight students, that chamber shall vote by individual ballot to determine which student(s) will advance.

Additional Duty for Parliamentarian

At regular intervals the Parliamentarian shall make available a record indicating the total number of speeches each congress person is credited with. The congress contestant has the responsibility to make sure that his/her number of speeches is correct.

(Councilor Harold Keller is NFL Clerk of Congress. Gary Harmon is Congress Director)

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This is the first of a continuing series of articles which appeared in the "Unsung Heroes," Public Employees Roundtable newsletter.

Why such a series? Because we believe that the effective advancement of one of PER's three missions - to encourage young people to consider careers in the public service -- greatly depends upon how much young Americans know about their system of government and the responsibilities of citizenship.

However, we have had to conclude that schools, for many years, have generally not been teaching civics. Hence, we will try through these articles to expose more students to at least the basics of their country's government and the role of citizens it.

How would these articles have such an impact? We will be urging all of our readers to make a point of finding out what (if anything) their local school system specifically offers in the way of civics. To what extent are students -- certainly by the time they are finishing high school -- knowledgeable about their country's government, based as it is on a federal structure and such constitutional principles as representation and the separation of powers, as well as about the importance of the citizens' role in this form of democracy.

And if such educational opportunities are absent in the system we will urge that, as parents and concerned citizens, our readers make their voices heard at the local and state levels to change this situation and to ask their friends and neighbors to do likewise.

For how can young persons be expected to consider working in the public sector with its thousands of career fields and millions of jobs -- if they have never had the benefit of learning how this whole governmental system is set up and operates? In effect, they are being cheated of, knowing about a large part of the world of work when thinking about choosing fulfilling employment. They will not discover the exciting challenges and many opportunities to serve their fellow citizens that public service offers.

We expect that this series of articles will be covering such topics as:

1. The vital significance of understanding the federal nature of our governmental system -- its national/state/local levels of Powers and responsibilities -- and hence differing employment fields and opportunities for service.

2. The importance of appreciating the operational effects of the principle of executive/legislative/judicial powers -- with some variation at the three structural levels -- and hence some quite special careers and roles found in these three branches.

3. The necessity of being acquainted with the various systems used for filling public sector positions, especially the ones based on merit and, hence, how better to prepare oneself for specific public career fields.

To conclude: If you are already convinced that something needs to be done to improve what our schools are doing (or not doing) in this area, there is no need to sit around waiting for the next article. Our stated purpose will already be accomplished by this article if you start to find out exactly what's going on with civics in your local school.

(Professor Lorentzen will be contributing a monthly column)
SINGLE DIAMOND COACHES

*Shawn Wingfield  
Wichita Northeast Magnet, KS  
September 1, 1999  
1,600 points

*Vera Yirsa  
Grove HS, OK  
September 10, 1999  
1,583 points

*Dixie Waldo  
Westlake HS, TX  
October 25, 1999  
1,826 points

DOUBLE DIAMOND COACHES

**Suzanne Wolfe Terry  
Hamblen HS - West, TN  
October 4, 1999  
3,900 points

**Todd Casper  
Carrollton HS, OH  
July 5, 1999  
7,915 points

**Nick Panopoulos  
Cheyenne-Central HS, WY  
October 5, 1999  
6,362 points
A morning at the St. Mark's debate tournament:

6:15 a.m.
This the wake up call you requested for six fite......

SLAM

6:25 a.m.
Ah, the alarm clock, the ever-effective back-up system.

SLAM

6:27 a.m.
After approximately 34 unsuccessful attempts to find the snooze button on the Courtyard Marriott clock radio, I managed to get enough energy to sit up in bed and turn the lights on. I noticed that the pizza boxes, Mountain Dew case, laptop chords, and the six incredibly inhospitable layers of plastic sheet on the bed and I, have somehow contorted themselves into a position roughly equivalent to a cross between Kama Sutra and Hatha Yoga.

6:30 a.m.
I extricate myself from my physical predicament and realize that it is roughly 27° in our room. But, it could be worse; yesterday morning we woke up to a balmy 94°. As you may or may not know, it is the strict policy of the Glenbrook North Debate Society to only stay in those hotels whose thermostats run on the freeze or fry system.

My partner has not yet noticed the frigid temperature as he is covered by a make shift blanket made up of our Clinton accordions, Federalism 2AC block, a printer cable, and a pink highlighter.

6:45 a.m.
I step into the special edition hot-water resistant shower - another strictly enforced GBN policy - and I get that feeling again. I almost always get it around 6:45 in the morning at St. Mark's. It's that "what the hell am I doing here" and "why can't I just sleep 15 minutes more," feeling. Although they have managed to deliver several hundred small bottles of completely useless toiletry and cosmetic products, apparently I have neglected to specifically mandate that the hotel supply us with fresh towels. Around the time I find myself trying to use the least disgusting one on the floor to remove the bitterly cold shower water, I am pretty well on my way to asking, why on earth I do such awful things to myself.

I guess that's my question for you then. Why are we here? Why do we do the incredible things we do for an activity that is so absurd? I mean, in reality, what do we do and say really is ludicrous. The Clinton disaster is perhaps the greatest string of argumentative lies ever promulgated to reasonably intelligent human beings on a large scale. Affirmatives are usually blatant oversimplifications and masterpieces of obfuscation - frankly, I don't even think we have a Forest Fire policy in Russia. Consult the Congress about the Kurile Island Dispute during the Kosovo Crises - or the NATO alliance about library censorship - these are self-evidently idiotic ideas; and yet every single one is a pet position for the Glenbrook North Debate team. As our assistant the Acolyte likes to say; It's all about smoke and mirrors, smoke and mirrors. And yet, we spend hours and hours and hours refining, preparing, thinking about these exaggerations, oversimplifications and out and out lies. And once all that has been done, all the work and forethought and patience gets spewed out at a beyond comprehensible rate of speed. We sacrifice our family lives, our social lives, our grades, our time, our energy and our hearts to this ridiculous activity.

Why?
A big part of the reason is the enjoyment of the activity itself - the act of debating. Competing against people of the caliber in this room (and outside it) is a wonderful experience. There's nothing you can do in a fleece vest and tie that will give you a bigger adrenaline rush than full-out intellectual war in a hotel ballroom at 9 in the morning. Perhaps it is the thrill we get from uncovering a great argument, a burning desire to learn more, read more, know more.

The scars of winning, whose opinions are typically given short shrift, have a medium for expressing themselves, or because it gives us a new and challenging arena in which to excel, or provides us with an escape, a power trip or a security blanket.

Debate requires such superhuman dedication to succeed competitively that in order to justify itself, debate (and success in debate) must be tied to things deep inside us. The need to learn, the need to be great, the drive to succeed - these are all things that have profound effects on us; they sit in places close to our hearts - and so we have little choice but to believe that these deeply seated needs can be at least somewhat fulfilled with success in debate - however we define it. Whatever the reason, it drives us to do some pretty wild stuff.

For example, we refuse to accept anything short of absolute triumph. Last year, when Glenbrook South took second at the Glenbrook Round Robin, Mr. Matt Whipple, the director of debate at GBN, sat next to his top team as they stared dejectedly into their water glasses. I was sitting nearby making a valiant attempt to double Todd's dejection being that coming in fourth should generate twice as much frustration as coming in second. So I hope he doesn't mind me quoting what he said to Todd as he patted him on the shoulder. He said: "Todd, you need to chill out", (clearly the truth, Todd really did need to chill out). "Ten years from now, no one will remember if you came in second, or first or last - I promise. But they will remember whether they had fun debating you, if they thought you were a good friend, if they were impressed by you as a person. So stop worrying about it."

Our absolute dedication to victory really is sort of silly once you think about it. Because as great as it is to win St. Mark's or the Glenbrooks or the TOC, the big plaque you get is a piece of wood with plastic and metal glued on. It's a piece of wood - a nice expensive piece of wood, but a piece of wood nonetheless - and once you get it - your problems, your flaws, your foibles and your troubles remain unchanged. Winning a tournament doesn't change anything about you except your trophy collection.
But aren't there intangible, personal benefits to achievement? Perhaps. But winning, in many ways, is a road without end - the end is an illusion - with every victory, we raise the bar higher and higher. Victory is in reality a treadmill - there are always more miles to be written, more updates to be cut, another elim to win. We tend to think that once we reach the next level, we will have finally accomplished something. But a treadmill that gives false hope is a very dangerous thing.

It is dangerous because these purported benefits of success shift our attention away from things that really do deserve our supreme efforts, our utmost attention. Things that really do matter in the grand scheme of things; like human beings.

The summer before my junior year, my best friend told me something that I promised myself I would repeat today. She said: "You know, every year, they have a senior give a speech at St. Mark's. And the person always talks about their friends. Next year when you give that speech you're going to break the tradition. You aren't going to talk about your friends, you're going to talk about how great it is to win.

I guess that gives you a pretty good idea of the kind of person I was at the time. Things are different now. The day that wonderful girl died, I knew I had to prove her wrong.

A little achievement can be a painful thing. Last year at this tournament, I was completely obsessed with victory. So obsessed that every time she asked me to visit her, I told her I would drop by, and even though it was only a short walk, I never went because I had to have absolutely positively up to the minute Mid-Term Election updates. On Sunday, Lee Hornbuckle and Adam Savoie unintentionally did me an incredible favor. They beat me on a 5-0 in semis - and they didn't even run Mid Terms. I got to spend almost four hours with Julia Burke watching the finals and the Novice Hoe-Down, a last little chunk of time with my best friend in the world. I got my last chance to see the wonderful way she lit up a room, how she looked as she tossed her blonde hair back and laughed her soul-warming laugh. I got to make fun of her knees, and feel the incredible bond I shared with her one last time. And that is something I would trade any debate round, any tournament, and any trophy in existence to experience again.

While I was writing this speech, a great debater and an equally excellent friend who won this tournament last year told me: "Even though we won St. Mark's last year, I still have a lot of regrets... little things... it was the last time I saw Julia and I wish I could have talked to her some more... I've got really good memories of St. Mark's. But I don't actually remember that much about debating in the final round besides Lee making a fool of himself. I do have a great image of you and Julia sitting on the ground down to our right, wearing your matching sweatshirts and smiling."

Debate is a wonderful activity with powerful potential to help us learn and grow. But sometimes, the fanatical dedication with which we approach it ends up undermining its most awesome benefits. Not because success in and of itself is evil, not because competition itself is flawed, but because we elevate it above everything else; like the people in this activity who touch our lives or the value of a good joke now and then to lighten up the finals of a major national tournament. Debate victories are great feats - it takes a lot to win a tournament. But after the initial shock of defeat is past, very few people look back on their debate career and say: Gee, I wish had cut one more Lezis search. They do regret not spending enough time on the things that really mattered. And I do wish that I had spent more time with Julia - and maybe cut one less search.

Competitive success does not solve our problems or make us better people - and however good it may feel to finally win the big one, that feeling pales in comparison to what it feels like to have found a truly great friend. We sometimes lose sight of the purely intellectual benefits, the wonderful ways in which this activity changes our hearts and our minds because we are so focused on winning - and that's a shame, because friendship and growth are the ultimate accomplishments.

This is the last St. Mark's of the 20th Century. In all likelihood, the debaters of the 21st will look back at us and laugh at our primitive attempts at argumentation - the Clinton disdain in particular. No matter how spectacular the last three elimination rounds of this tournament are, they will not reign supreme for very long in the collective memory of the debate community. And chances are, no one will remember who went for what in the block - or what the decision in quarters was - and although they might dimly recall the name of the school that wins, they will never really be able to put a person to the team code.

But today the best debaters in the country have an opportunity - the last chance in this century to take a step back and think about the basic reasons we bother with this activity in the first place. We have a choice; we can accept the supremacy of achievement at all costs and continue to value the win above all else - or we can decide that perhaps the greatest benefits of debate cannot be represented by a piece of wood and plastic. I don't think that we should give up the competition; or that debaters should turn into the Care Bears and hug each other at the end of every cross examination. I also don't think that every debater in this room is dead set on grabbing the golden ring at the expense of his or her friends - nor am I (hypocritically) attacking the value of an intense work ethic. But I do think that as a community we have, by and large, oversold victory and undersold real accomplishment - we sometimes choose the next step on the treadmill over a chance to touch the lives of amazing people who may be stripped from our grasp at any moment. For me it took the loss of an extraordinary friend to realize how truly silly it is to allow competition to undermine friendship - not a day goes by that I don't feel the scars of winning. I think that maybe, just maybe, we would be better off if we recognized that while debate itself is a rather ludicrous and unimportant activity in the grand scheme of things, the people in debate, and the value of the experience itself are indescribably precious... The 21st century will probably not remember great debaters, but it just might remember great people.

(This speech was delivered by Dan Salmon of Glenbrook North High School at the 1999 St. Mark's tournament. Dan and partner Shawn Powers won the National Debate Championship in 1999)
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PRACTICAL REFUTATION AND AN EFFECTIVE FIRST AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL
by Lisa Seeland

Although many textbooks describe the necessary strategy a first affirmative rebuttalist (1AR) must use, practical experience reveals that many times, an ideal textbook situation cannot be reached. In reality, 1AR for the speaker is rarely a textbook experience. The literal definition of rebuttal, as documented by Austin Freely in his book, *Argumentation and Debate: Rational Decision Making*, states, "The term rebuttal, strictly interpreted, means to overcome opposing evidence and reasoning by introducing other evidence which will destroy its effect." To refute effectively the negative arguments and reestablish the affirmative position, a practical approach which incorporates known theories but allows a clear and personal style of debate must be used. As Roy V. Wood states in *Strategic Debate*, "Most debaters and coaches now realize that usually a debate is won or lost in the first affirmative rebuttal." The following strategies suggest a practical approach to ensure that the debate is not lost in the 1AR.

The 1AR’s burden is described by Roy V. Wood, who claims it is necessary "To further the affirmative's strategies of fulfilling the burden of proof, maintaining the offensive, and narrowing the debate." At a theoretical level, this burden seems reasonable. However, realistically, because of the time constraints and the amount of material that must be covered, this becomes a difficult task. The 1AR's difficulties are compounded as a rebuttalist, for he must effectively refute the negative block, twelve minutes of negative speeches, in only five minutes. As Wood comments:

The negative block is a strong strategic force in the debate because it is uninterrupted. And, more important, the affirmative team has only two short speeches in which to reply to it. The bulk of this reply obviously must come in the first affirmative rebuttal. To effectively counter the negative

block in the short time period allotted, however, reasoning must take precedence over hard evidence. Freely presents several methods of refutation which can be applied to the 1AR in a very practical and successful manner.

The *first* area deals with reasoning. This concept is the key to a successful 1AR, as there is not enough time to externally document each point. The *second* area requires that the rebuttalist reveal logical fallacies of the negative arguments and position. Wood states that:

By thoroughly understanding the "illogical possibilities," a debater can become very effective at refutation and rebuttal. It is useful and necessary, then, for the student to know the fallacies of factual, value, and causal arguments because several analytical fallacies frequently appear in the debate.

An argument is fallacious, if, for some reason, its conclusion is not justified by the evidence that has been presented in support of it. Logic or facts used to justify the conclusion are both examples of "evidence" which, when faulty, cause the analytical fallacies. As stated, such fallacies can appear on three levels:

- **Factual**
- **Value**
- **Causal**

By clearly understanding the above terms, a 1AR can rapidly and effectively dispel many of the negative's arguments. At the factual level, the two common fallacies and simple examples of such occurrences follow.

1) **Personal Experience**, when the debater applies personal knowledge on a broad basis, "In my town, everyone takes a driver's education course, therefore, it is obvious that it would be redundant and unnecessary to mandate such a program nationally..."

2) **Statistics**, using numbers from a study to prove facts. Although sounding impressive, statistics can often be misleading to a judge as they represent only a projected conclusion based on a few samples. It is obvious that many fallacies can be created by simply neglecting to explain the sample base, the number of people surveyed or tested, from which the statistics were derived. The cross-examination period is the most logical and strategic time to reveal such fallacies to the judge. Do not be afraid to ask your opponent how large the sample base was, who the study was conducted by, and the geographical location(s) in which the study was conducted. By doing so, a "100% reduction in the number of teenage pregnancies due to sex-education," can most likely be limited to a statistic representative of a single school rather than an entire nation. This simple use of logic can make a seemingly unarguable fact an irrelevant point when applied on a larger scope required in a debate.

**Value Arguments**

The second level deals with value arguments. "A value argument is one in which the advocate wants his audience to agree that a positive or a negative value should be attached to a particular situation." This type of argument is directed at an emotional level, and often involves the application of emotional tactics rather than facts. In using value arguments, the negative team tries to make the judge see a non-existent link between two statements; one involves facts, the other simply emotions. For example, a negative might prove to a judge that the Iranian government is receiving shotguns from the United States. However, once they have proved such a point, the negative team might resort to a value argument to justify a stoppage of such sales stating, "The United States should cut all military assistance to Iran because they held Americans hostage." At the emotional level, this argument is effective, but as a 1AR, simply pointing out to the judge the fallacies of relying simply on emotion can both save time and bring
ing of the necessary burdens and the possible arguments that are an integral part of his speech, he must transmit his thoughts to the judge. This must occur through the process of delivery; thus, clarity of argument must be given highest priority. Clarity does not include just the physical aspects of speaking such as diction, pitch, enunciation, volume and pace, but the IAR must include the "reasoning" behind each statement; he must show the logical link behind each statement which defeats the negative argument. This is especially necessary in rebuttals since evidence is not generally used for documentation. Another necessary requirement of clarity is sign-posting, in other words letting the judge know exactly what argument is being presented and where it applies to the negative arguments in the debate. This allows the judge to spend his time listening to arguments rather than trying to find his place in the debate.

Parallel to the importance of clarity is the importance of emphasis. Freely explains:

Not all parts of a speech are of equal importance. Some parts of the speech are indispensable to the arguments; other parts are of lesser importance. The advocate's problem is to emphasize the more important parts of his speech. Emphasis makes it easier for the audience to grasp and retain the ideas the advocate must get across to them if he is to prove his case.9 The most practical and effective way to achieve emphasis is to use the strategy of grouping. This entails that instead of each point being refuted individually, similar arguments are "grouped together" and defeated with a single response. For example, if the negative presented three separate, but related, arguments which deal with only one major point, the IAR should use one response to defeat the common fallacy all three similar arguments share. Other important aspects of emphasis are equally as effective in clarifying and heightening of the perceptiveness of the judge. These include:

1) pace (try to keep at an understandable level, and always slow down at the very end of the speech).
2) volume (increase volume at important points which are important to the affirmative).
3) repetition (repeat necessary information or important points; especially if the judge looks confused).
4) order (is also very important, and is discussed in the following paragraph).

Once the IAR has a firm understanding of the necessary burdens and the possible arguments that are an integral part of his speech, he must transmit his thoughts to the judge. This must occur through the process of delivery; thus, clarity of argument must be given highest priority. Clarity does not include just the physical aspects of speaking such as diction, pitch, enunciation, volume and pace, but the IAR must include the "reasoning" behind each statement; he must show the logical link behind each statement which defeats the negative argument. This is especially necessary in rebuttals since evidence is not generally used for documentation. Another necessary requirement of clarity is sign-posting, in other words letting the judge know exactly what argument is being presented and where it applies to the negative arguments in the debate. This allows the judge to spend his time listening to arguments rather than trying to find his place in the debate.

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### NFL'S TOP 50 DISTRICTS
(as of December 1, 1999)

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<th>Rank</th>
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## NFL DISTRICT STANDINGS

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LOAFING UNDER PRESSURE

Some sage once said a tournament was "one hour of panic followed by one hour of boredom."

Tournaments, stressful?
Not if you take time to relax.

Kids always will find a place to kick back -- on carpets, on stairs, on lawns -- even on cold hard cement!
NFL Football--NOT T-Shirts

These "50/50 blend" shirts celebrate the original NFL by proclaiming in red letters - NFL ✝ on the back, and the NFL key on the front.

Colors: Khaki, Beige, Gray (M, L, XL, XX)

$11.00

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Total

SHIP TO:

NAME ________________________________
SCHOOL NAME ________________________________
ADDRESS ___________________________________________
CITY ___________________ STATE _______ ZIP + 4 ___________
PHONE __________________________ EMAIL _______________________

National Forensic League
P.O. Box 38
Ripon, WI 54971-0038
Phone - 920-748-6206
e-mail - rasmusse@mail.wiscnet.net

Will the flattery never end?
Just ask anybody. Members of the National Forensic League are strong. Strong enough to stand their ground, with something to say. Some call them opinionated. That’s true enough. Who isn’t? The difference is they have the guts to get up there and tell it like it is. Do you? For more information about the NFL, talk with members or call 920.748.6206 for an earful.

NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE Lincoln Financial Group